

March 1, 2018 3:00 PM EST

Falls of the Ohio State Park
6000 North Post Road Rm# 701
Indianapolis, IN 46216

Attendance

Board Members Present:

All-Terrain Vehicle Users- Jay Jackson (proxy)
Bicyclists- Greg Midgley
Environmental Groups- Kevin Hardie
Equestrians- Yvette Rollins
Hikers- Terry Fletcher
Mountain Bikers- Jeff Fetterer
Off-Road Motorcyclists-Rayce Guthrie
Parks & Recreation Agencies-Travis Tranbarger
Pedestrians- Pat Martin
Water Trail Users- Margaret Easton

DNR Staff:

Todd Blevins- Outdoor Recreation
Bob Bronson- Outdoor Recreation
Amy Marisavljevic- Outdoor Recreation

Guests:

Phillip Hendershot- Ohio River Greenway
Allan Horn- Friends of White River
Scott Martin- River Heritage Conservancy
David Rollins
Rob Waiz- City of Jeffersonville

Board Members Not Present:

Four Wheel Drive Users- Ryan Sweany
Health/Higher Education- Kate Riordan
Snowmobilers- Len Neisler
Trail Support Groups- Angie Pool
Users with Disabilities- David Meihls

Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Chair Jeff Fetterer welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM. He thanked everyone in attendance for coming. Amy Marisavljevic thanked Kevin Hardie for helping to organize the meeting.

Introductions

All Trails Advisory Board (TAB) members and guests introduced themselves. Tim Garrett gave his proxy to Jay Jackson.

Approval of the Agenda

Marisavljevic noted the most updated copy of the agenda was available at the meeting for TAB members and guests as well as had been e-mailed out that week. Fetter called for a motion to approve the agenda. Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda and Pat Martin seconded. Motion passed.

Review and Approval of December 7, 2017 Minutes

Fetterer asked for any comments or additions to December 7, 2017 minutes. No comments or additions. Fetterer asked for a motion to approve. Hardie made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Yvette Rollins seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker Presentations

Ohio River Greenway Update

Philip Hendershot, Ohio River Greenway Commission Chair, introduced himself and the Ohio River Greenway (ORG) project. He explained the ORG, when complete later this summer, will be seven miles long connecting the communities of Jeffersonville, Clarksville, and New Albany. In addition to connecting these three communities and two counties, the ORG also connects southern Indiana to Louisville via the Big Four Bridge. Although the ORG commission, which is made up of representative from all the communities and several stakeholder organizations, started in 1993, the ORG did not start development of the trail until 2002. It will be completed this year and has been funded through a variety of funding strategies. This did not include any bonds, but the communities did rely on both public and private funding sources. Helping in cost was the fact the ORG required little to no land acquisition.

Despite taking years to complete, Hendershot stressed that the ORG has already been a success story as it has proved transformational to the region. The ORG connects the communities as well as their rich history and ample area attractions. The ORG has helped significantly boost both quality of life, tourism, and economic development in the area. Perhaps the best example of this can be seen at the foot of the Big Four Bridge and the adjacent Big Four Station, a new park and public space, in Jeffersonville. The area has revitalized with several new restaurants, businesses, and other new developments locating on or near the trail, which appeals to both residents and tourists. This success of the ORG has also led to Clarksville to re-locate their downtown closer to the river and ORG. The ORG played an integral part in the formation of the new River Heritage Conservancy. Both Hardie and Marisavljevic thanks Hendershot for his presentation and guiding the TAB on an earlier hike.

River Heritage Conservancy

Scott Martin, Executive Director of the River Heritage Conservancy (RHC), introduced himself and presented on the vision of the RHC. He stated that the RHC is a non-profit organization modeled after the Central Park Conservancy. The group is focused on conserving and developing recreational amenities on land adjacent to Ohio River. Their vision is to create a linear park along the Ohio River, utilizing the ORG as the backbone, which will be a destination as it will offer a variety of experiences to 1.2 million Louisville metro area residents as well as tourists. Inspired by Frederic Law Olmstead, the designer of Louisville's park system, Scott Martin reported that RHC will focus on his motto of "great cities have great parks." RHC will aim to expand the momentum of the ORG by conserving land, developing more parks, and making additional trail connections. They group will also focus on highlighting the Ohio River and the area's existing cultural, historic, and natural resources. RHC will have several partners to help complete their vision, which may take a few decades to achieve. Currently, the group is focused on planning and fundraising. Marisavljevic thanks Martin for taking the time to speak to the TAB and wished him luck on the project.

DNR Report

Division of Outdoor Recreation Staff

Marisavljevic reported that Austin Taylor has taken a position with DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife. Marisavljevic will once again be the DNR liaison to the TAB. Marisavljevic briefly introduced Todd Blevins, a new Grants Coordinator with the Division of Outdoor Recreation

who started in January. Finally, she reported that Division Director position remains vacant, but they are hopeful that a new director will be in place soon.

Grants

Marisavljevic announced Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants applications are due May 1 while Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant applications are due June 1. Potential applicants should contact Bob Bronson for more information about either grant program.

Legislation

Marisavljevic stated the Indiana Legislature introduced several bills regarding outdoor recreation this session, but only one has made it out of committee. HB 115 is a small, but important, amendment to the existing recreational user statute that would expand immunity coverage to landowners for trail, greenway, and park access. The bill, authored by Rep. Carey Hamilton and co-authored by Rep. Wes Culver, had bipartisan support as well as backing from local trail managers and neighboring landowners of trails. Since the bill has already passed both the House and Senate, the DNR anticipates it will most likely be signed into law by Governor Holcomb soon and take effect July 1.

Bicycle Trails Task Force

Marisavljevic reported that Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force (BTTF) held their first funding and safety subcommittee meetings on January 24. The funding subcommittee reviewed current trail funding sources available in Indiana and will eventually develop six innovative funding methods. The safety subcommittee went over Indiana's existing bike laws and will eventually make recommendations to make bicycling on Indiana's trails and roads safer. The next BTTF meeting will be March 21 in Indianapolis. The BTTF must submit a final report to the legislature and governor by July 1, 2019. Also of interest, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) hired a contractor to help them with Indiana's first bike/ pedestrian report. The report will include findings, resources, opportunities, best practices, and recommendations for all types of bike/pedestrian infrastructure, including trails. Collaboration between the contractor and the BTTF will help ensure both reports are more comprehensive and effective.

Old Business

2018 Meeting Locations

Hardie confirmed that Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (IDNL) in Michigan City will host the June 28 meeting. He is coordinating with Dan Plath, former TAB member and current Resource Chief for IDNL, for help with a meeting space, a pre-meeting paddle, and visiting an accessible canoe/kayak launch in the area. Marisavljevic confirmed that group would like to stay overnight on Wednesday. She volunteered to get a room block as well as help with potential pre-meeting activities and logistics.

The TAB decided to meet at Yellowwood State Forest (YSF) on September 6. Terry Fletcher suggested that the group do a pre-meeting hike and potentially visit the backcountry area to see the results of the selected timber harvest. The group confirmed they would like someone from the Division of Forestry to educate them about timber harvests, other forest management practices, and recreation on State Forests. Marisavljevic volunteered to reach out to the Division of Forestry for help with location

and a presenter. Fetterer volunteered to help find a spot in Nashville for a pre-meeting lunch. Finally, the TAB prefers to meet at Fort Harrison State Park again for their December meeting.

Other Business

Marisavljevic provided a brief history of the TAB, which include the board being founded in 1994 for the purpose of qualifying Indiana for RTP monies. She stated the TAB continues to exceed this requirement. Additionally, TAB meetings have been a great venue for members to learn and network. Rollins and Fetterer echoed this sentiment and stressed the importance of taking what they learn back to their trail user groups. Marisavljevic also noted that members were not allowed to lobby on behalf TAB or DNR. However, members are allowed to contact legislators as individuals or on behalf of another organization. She reminded the TAB that they or their proxy are eligible for travel reimbursement, which helps enable the TAB to attend meetings and get to see projects all over the state. Finally, she noted for new members that the TAB website is: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4094.htm>. Here, they can find information about fellow TAB members, terms, meeting times, agendas, minutes, etc.

New Business

New Officer Nominations

Marisavljevic thanked Fetterer and Pat Martin for serving this past year. She then called for nominations for both Chair and Vice Chair. Fetterer explained that he would prefer to step down as Chair, but would be willing to serve as Vice Chair due to professional changes. Fetterer nominated Pat Martin for Chair and Hardie seconded. Pat Martin agreed to serve. No other nominations for Chair.

Pat Martin nominated Fetterer for Vice Chair and Hardie seconded. Fletcher inquired on to the duties before nominating himself. Fetterer seconded his nomination. Jackson motioned to close nominations and Rayce Guthrie seconded. Marisavljevic issued a paper vote for all TAB members. The TAB appointed Pat Martin as Chair in a 10-0 vote and Fetterer as Vice Chair in a 7-3 vote.

RTP Scoring

Bronson explained RTP monies come through the Federal Highway Administration to each state based on a statutory formula and the gas tax on recreational vehicles, such as ATVs and snowmobiles. Bronson stated in Indiana the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation administers these grants, including developing the criteria and ranking projects. He acknowledged the role the TAB plays in making Indiana eligible for its funding. Indiana gets approximately \$1.2 million in RTP monies per year, which includes up to 7% for administration and up to 5% for education. After that, 30% goes for motorized, 30% for non-motorized, and the roughly remaining 40% used for discretionary trail projects. He mentioned that Indiana generally uses its discretionary money for non-motorized trail projects. Bronson mentioned that all types of trail projects, including hard surface, natural surface, and water trails, as well as development and maintenance of trails and amenities are federally eligible. Although Indiana has used the money on all of these before, RTP grants are generally awarded to the DNR's motorized properties and hard surface trails most years.

The discussion then turned to Indiana's criteria. Bronson explained that the criteria stems from findings and recommendations from the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). An example of this would be the SCORP identifying that Indiana has lack of public lands for recreation, hence applicants receive more points if they acquire land for their trail project than those putting trail on existing public land. Fetterer inquired about using RTP monies for maintenance on the Knobstone Trail (KT). Bronson also explained that because Indiana is lacking in miles of trails, the focus Indiana's RTP monies has developing trails rather than maintain existing ones. This has been mostly an internal state decision, as maintenance is eligible according to federal program guidelines. However, the TAB noted the KT's RTP grant was the exception to this. Rollins asked about if there had been any significant changes to the application process. Bronson reported that it has generally stayed the same over the past few years. The only minor changes are the maps that award points based on first time applicants, population vs. trail mileage, and access within 5 miles.

Pat Martin asked separately about how State Parks roads were funded and if there were any Bicentennial Nature Trust (BNT) monies left. Marisavljevic replied that Division of State Parks or INDOT would know more. Bronson answered that all of the BNT monies have been earmarked and there is a waiting list for any projects that might fall through.

Nature Preserves

Marisavljevic stated she talked to John Bacone, Director of Nature Preserves, last week to help convey the nature preserves designation process to the TAB. She explained that nature preserves focus on protecting threatened, rare, or endangered species or habitats conducive for them. Although nature preserves can be all types of public and private land, the TAB wanted to focus on the designation process on DNR properties. Marisavljevic walked the TAB through the three main steps. The first focus on the regional biologist identifying the natural resource needing protection. The second step is working with the landowner, if they are willing, to create a plan that would help ensure that species or habitat. The final plan takes into account the landowners needs and wants for the land, including recreation. If both parties are in agreement, the designation goes to the Natural Resource Commission (NRC) for official approval.

Marisavljevic conveyed Bacone's explanation that recreation allowed in nature preserves as has changed over time, especially with newer trends like mountain biking. Although nature preserve plans now take into account a variety of recreation and trail types, many of the older nature preserves have banned horse and mountain bike trails on them due to previous policies. Marisavljevic also noted that land managers, not Division of Nature Preserves staff, are responsible for evaluating their recreation needs and completing any necessary outreach with key stakeholders on their lands for their plan. Finally, she noted that there are three spots on DNR properties that have potential to become nature preserves this year: Hurricane Creek in Ferdinand State Forest, one in Pokagon State Park, and Salamonie Ravines in Salamonie State Forest. These are all still in the plan process have not been introduced to the NRC yet.

The TAB discussed the lack of transparency with the nature preserves process on DNR land, especially to stakeholders like them as recreation trail user groups. They formally requested that Bacone or someone from the Division of Nature Preserves give a presentation at one of their next meetings so they could learn and ask questions. Additionally, the TAB discussed making notification of these potential designations of a more formal and automated for the TAB. It was decided on that the TAB would like to be notified about potential nature preserve designations at least 3 months prior to them being added to the NRC agenda. Fetterer motioned to make this request to the designation process to the DNR Director via letter and Rollins seconded. Motion passed. The TAB Chair is responsible for signing off on any formal letters from the TAB.

User Group Reports

All-Terrain Vehicle Users – Jackson reported that the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) community was disappointed after no changes were made this past legislative season regarding the youth helmet law. However, a good roundtable of key stakeholders regarding the law was held in February.

Bicyclists – Greg Midgley again introduced himself along with his involvement with cycling, National Road Heritage Trail, and locally the Vandalia trail. He reported that Boone and Hancock Counties had recently launched trail initiatives. He noted that Hendricks County has recently been reinvigorated on efforts to develop their trail system.

Environmental Groups – Hardie announced that this year will be the 50th Anniversary of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act as well as the National Trails Act. The National Parks Service seems to be reinvigorating the programs because of this. Also energized are several environmental advocacy efforts, including Patagonia. Locally, Hardies reported on many, new efforts regarding the White River in Indiana including a plan, funding, new partnerships, and now a White River Caucus. Lastly, he announced that 30th White River Clean Up is scheduled for April 14 in downtown Indianapolis.

Equestrians – Rollins reported that both the Hoosier Back Country Horsemen (HBH) and Indiana Trail Riders Association have several workdays slated for 2018 in Hoosier National Forest (HNF) and on DNR properties. She noted she personally will be leading a workday for National Trails Day in Greene-Sullivan State Forest. Additionally, HBH will participate in HNF's Get Outdoors day in Bedford on June 16.

Four-Wheel-Drive Users – No report

Health/Higher Education – No report

Hikers – Fletcher announced that Hoosier Hikers Council (HHC) is working on a new trail at the Bluffs of Beaver Bend Nature Preserves in Martin County. HHC continue to do maintenance to several other hiking trails around Indiana, including the Tecumseh Trail. Lastly, the HHC will host the Run with the Foxes race on May 12.

Mountain Bikers – Fetterer reported that the Hoosier Mountain Bike Association (HMBA) is working on completing the Crooked Creek Trail in YSF. After this, they'll

focus in on building the Weedpatch Trail in Brown County State Park, which will allow beginners to access the trail system from the campground. Fetterer noted the unfortunate situation with the rogue trail at Fort Harrison State Park. He stated that the men caught were not active HMBA members and HMBA will continue to work positively with the DNR on approved trail projects.

Off-Road Motorcyclists – Guthrie stated that Lawrence County Recreational Park will again host Dirt Bike School. The park will also host the Miracle Trail Ride & Race in the fall again as this proved successful in 2017.

Parks and Recreation Agencies – Travis Tranbarger noted several ongoing efforts to improve their park system. Additionally, he stated his agency is working better with the non-profit B&O Trail Association on their trail, which has recently eliminated the gap in the trail. This better relationship included collaboration on a new, comprehensive Brownsburg Trail Map.

Pedestrians – Pat Martin told the TAB that City of Bloomington is gearing up for a busy and exciting May. The Switchyard Park is set to have its ground breaking while City also continues to work on its transportation plan, which has heavy emphasis on bicycles and pedestrians. Lastly, he noted that the City of Bloomington and Indiana University will launch their new dockless bikeshare program.

Snowmobilers – No report

Trail Support Groups –No report

Users with Disabilities – No Report

Water Trail Users – Margaret Easton noted that there are several upcoming clean-ups and workdays on Indiana's rivers.

Announcements

March 20, 2018- Accessibility Guidelines Workshop (Portage, IN)

April 8, 2018- Opening Day for Trails

May 1-3, 2018- PlacesForBikes Conference (Indianapolis, IN)

May 13-16, 2018- Mid-America Trails & Greenways Conference (Columbus, OH)

June 2, 2018- National Trails Day

June 14, 2018- Greenways Foundation Luncheon (Carmel, IN)

2018 Meeting Dates

June 28, 2018- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

September 6, 2018- Yellowwood State Forest

December 6, 2018- Fort Harrison State Park

Adjournment

Fetterer made a motion to adjourn and Jackson seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.